

## **7.0 OTHER REQUIRED CEQA SECTIONS**

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION TO ADDITIONAL CEQA REQUIREMENTS DISCUSSED IN THIS SECTION**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires evaluations of potentially significant environmental impacts, irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources, and Project-related growth-inducing impacts. This section evaluates the proposed Project in relation to these requirements.

### **7.2 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF PROPOSED PROJECT THAT CANNOT BE AVOIDED AND CANNOT BE MITIGATED TO LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT**

Section 15126.2(b) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of feasible mitigation measures. The environmental impacts that are expected as a result of construction, operation, and abandonment of the Project are described in the technical subsections of Chapter 4, Environmental Analysis. The impact analysis concludes that all of the potentially significant impacts of the proposed Project can be reduced to less than significant levels through the application of feasible mitigation measures. Therefore, with incorporation of the recommended mitigations, implementation of the proposed Project is not expected to result in any significant and unavoidable impacts.

### **7.3 SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF PROPOSED PROJECT THAT WOULD BE IRREVERSIBLE IF THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED**

Section 15126.2(c) of the CEQA Guidelines states that significant irreversible environmental changes which would be caused by the proposed Project, should it be implemented, include the following:

- Uses of non-renewable resources during the initial and continued phases of the project which would be irreversible because a large commitment of such resources makes removal or non-use thereafter unlikely;
- Primary impacts and, particularly, secondary impacts which commit future generations to similar uses; and,
- Irreversible damage, which may result from environmental accidents, associated with the project.

Based on the above description of significant irreversible environmental changes, the potential significant irreversible impacts of the proposed Project are evaluated below.

### **Non-renewable Resource Use**

The proposed Project would consume non-renewable and locally limited natural resources (*i.e.*, fossil fuels, water and electricity) during the construction phase of the project, but this demand, and the quantity consumed, is not considered significant.

### **Primary and Secondary Impacts Committing Future Generations to Similar Uses**

The CEQA Guidelines reference an example of a highway improvement project that provided access to a previously inaccessible area as one that would commit future generations to similar uses. Although the proposed Project is one component in a larger international system, the fact that a portion of the Project is being constructed in San Luis Obispo County does not affect land or offshore uses in such a way that commits future generations to similar uses. The Project does not have primary or secondary impacts resulting in long-term effects as defined under this sub-section of CEQA.

### **Irreversible Damage Resulting From Environmental Accidents**

The potential for fuel spills associated with the offshore cable laying operations, and to a lesser degree from onshore construction vehicles and equipment, is the primary potential risk of upset impact associated with the proposed Project that could cause irreversible damage to the environment. No other Project scenario has the potential to cause irreversible damage.

## **7.4 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

Section 15126.2(d) of the CEQA Guidelines generally describes growth-inducing impacts as those actions that may induce economic or population growth in a geographic area. Specifically, a project may be considered growth-inducing if one or more of the following criteria are met:

- Removal of obstacles to population growth (*e.g.*, a major expansion of a waste water treatment plant or other essential public service that would allow for more construction in a service area);
- Economic expansion or growth (*e.g.*, employment expansion, *etc.*);

- Precedent setting actions (e.g., an amendment to the general plan allowing for a change in land use categories); and,
- Development or encroachment in an isolated area, or more adjacent to open space, or an otherwise undeveloped area.

A project may be considered growth-inducing if it meets one of these criteria. The growth-inducing aspects of the proposed Project are evaluated below.

### **Removal of Obstacles to Growth**

The services provided by the Project would enhance existing telecommunications networks internationally by increasing data transfer capacity and the capacity of other telecommunication systems. The provision of such services, particularly on an international level, does not remove obstacles to growth within the Project area nor does it foster the potential for additional growth. The Project is not considered to cause significant growth inducement under this criterion.

### **Economic Expansion or Growth**

Limited short-term and no substantial long-term economic growth would occur as a result of the increased activity associated with construction and operation of the proposed Project. The short-term growth would be associated with construction of the offshore and onshore portions of the Project, which would occur over an approximate 15 to 20 week period. Workers associated with the construction process are likely to contribute to a minor increase in business activity within the county; however, long-term project employment opportunities are limited. While the construction activities would result in a short-term increase to the county's revenue base, the operational activities would not result in a substantial increase to the revenue base. Therefore, due to the short-term and limited nature of the construction activities, economic expansion or growth associated with this Project is not considered significant. Because the fiber optic systems within the area have been completed previously, the addition of one new cable is expected to result in no substantial long-term economic expansion or growth through additional employment or increase in tax revenue.

### **Open Space Development**

Both the offshore and onshore segments of the proposed Project would occur within and adjacent to areas previously developed with submarine and terrestrial fiber optic and power cables, respectively. The onshore cable alignments will be located within a

1 developed conduit system right-of-way and within private easements. The Project  
2 would not result in significant or irreversible development of open space areas. The  
3 offshore area has been subjected to previous fiber optic projects and is located in an  
4 area that for the most part avoids rocky habitat and parallels several existing submarine  
5 cables. Therefore, the proposed Project is not considered to be growth-inducing under  
6 this criterion.

7 **Summary of Growth-Inducing Impacts**

8 The proposed Project does not meet any of the criteria specified above and is therefore  
9 not considered to be growth-inducing.